

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UN, SENV

SUBJECT: WATER CONFERENCE PREPCOM - FINAL REPORT

REF: A) USUN 678

B) USUN 725

C) STATE 042696

1. SUMMARY: ONE WEEK MEETING OF UN COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONVENED AS PREPARATORY BODY FOR MARCH 1977 WORLD WATER CONFERENCE IN ARGENTINA, ENDED FRIDAY AFTER-NOON, FEBRUARY 27, AFTER PRODUCTIVE, NON-POLITICAL SESSION. U.S. DELEGATION EXTREMELY SATISFIED WITH OUT-COME, AND CONSIDERS ALL MAJOR US OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED AND NO NEW PROBLEMS INTRODUCED. US OBJECTIVES SOUGHT AND ATTAINED INCLUDED: NEW YORK SITE FOR 2ND PREPCOM IN EARLY 1977; DEFERRAL OF ACTION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE; SPECIFIC INCLUSION OF "ALL STATES" FORMULA FOOTNOTE IN
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PARTICIPATION RES AND FLEXIBILITY RE INVITATIONS TO

PERMIT US NGO'S PARTICIPATION; NON-TECHNICAL ORIENTATION OF THEMATIC PAPERS, REGIONAL REPORTS AND ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCE; AGREEMENT ON BROAD BUT FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR CONFERENCE STRUCTURE; ASSOCIATION WITH CONSENSUS ON APPROVAL OF SECRETARY-GENERAL WITHOUT INVOLVEMENT IN SOMETIMES HEATED DEBATE. (DETAILED COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREPCOM TO ECOSOC BEING POUCHED). END SUMMARY.

2. CONFERENCE SECRETARY GENERAL: A DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A SECRETARY GENERAL FOR THE CONFERENCE INTRODUCED BY CANADA WAS APPROVED BY PREPCOM CONSENSUS (SEE DOCUMENT E/C.7/L.48). THE UNITED STATES DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKING GROUP OR IN THE DEBATE ON THIS SPECIFIC ITEM, ALTHOUGH WE SUPPORTED CONSENSUS AFTER APPROVAL. THE SECRETARIAT INFORMED THE COMMITTEE THAT SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF AN SYG COULD NOT BE MADE UNTIL ECOSOC TOOK DECISION ON THE MATTER AND THAT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE HE COULD BE APPOINTED THEREFORE WOULD BE 1, MAY 1976. SEVERAL WEO MEMBERS ALONG WITH THE USSR, UKRAINE SSR AND POLAND QUESTIONED WHETHER APPOINTMENT AT SUCH A LATER DATE WAS USEFUL, AS WELL AS THE COST IMPLICATIONS. APPOINTMENT OF A SECRETARY GENERAL, AT THE LEVEL OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR

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7) \$8,936 THOUSAND DOLLARS SALARY AND RELATED COSTS, PLUS ADDITIONAL 10 THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR TRAVEL. THE OPERATIVE RESOLUTION LANGUAGE REQUESTED THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO STUDY POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR THE POST OF CONFERENCE SECRETARY GENERAL, IN CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO FORMAL APPOINTMENT BY ECOSOC. FYI. BAUM, CENTRE DIRECTOR, INDICATED INFORMALLY HE BELIEVES VOLKER (NETHERLANDS) WOULD BE STRONG CONFERENCE SYG. END FYI.

3. SECOND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING: A SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE CONFERENCE IS REQUIRED. DEBATE ON THIS ITEM CENTERED ON THE TIME AND LOCATION FOR SUCH A SECOND MEETING. INITIALLY THE SECRETARIAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROPOSED THAT IT BE HELD IN GENEVA, OCTOBER 25 THRU 29, 1976. AFTER COORDINATOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER EXAMINATION OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES, IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT THE SECOND MEETING WILL BE HELD IN NEW YORK, FROM JANUARY 3 TO 7, 1977.

4. CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION: AS INDICATED IN REFTEL
B) THE SYRIANS JOINED BY ALGERIA,

EGYPT, IRAQ, INDIA, MALI, PALISTAN AND YUGOSLAVIA
TABLED A DRAFT RESOLUTION ON CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION
(DOCUMENT E/C.7/L43). DOCUMENT WAS APPROVED WITH ONE
MODIFICATION- A FOOTNOTE WILL BE ADDED TO PARAGRAPH
1 (A) REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF "ALL STATES". AS
INDICATED IN REFTEL B, THIS WAS DONE AT BEHEST OF UK,
AND FOOTNOTE WILL BE SIMILAR TO THAT REFERENCED IN
THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE REPORT. THERE WAS NO DIS-
CUSSION OF THIS INCLUSION, AND ITEM WAS APPROVED WITH-
OUT DEBATE. REGARDING OTHER PARTICIPANTS, FOLLOWING
RESOLUTION APPROVAL BY CONSENSUS, US DELEGATION MADE
STATEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTELC. THE SUBSTANCE
OF THE TEXT WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE FINAL REPORT
OF THE COMMITTEE. AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, THE PARTICIPATION
FORMULA ADOPTED BY THE PREPCOM FOLLOWS THE PRACTICES
ESTABLISHED IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3438 (XXX)
FOR THE HABITAT CONFERENCE. THIS FORMULATION, INTER
ALIA, AUTHORIZED THE CONFERENCE SECRETARY GENERAL TO
INVITE NGO'S OF "GENUINELY INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER"
WHICH ARE DIRECTLY CONCERNED AND EXPRESSED THE WISH
TO BE REPRESENTED BY OBSERVERS" THEREBY ALLOWING AT-
TENDANCE BY US NGO'S SOME OF WHOM HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED
AN INTEREST IN THE WORLD WATER CONFERENCE.

5. RULES OF PROCEDURE: THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE
DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE TABLED BY THE SECRETARIAT,
(SEE REFTEL C) AND AFTER SOME ATTEMPT TO ITEMIZE THE
CHANGES PROPOSED BY VARIOUS DELS, THE COMMITTEE AGREED
TO INCLUDE A SINGLE PARAGRAPH AS FOLLOWS: "IT WAS
CONCLUDED THAT THE SECRETARIAT SHOULD REVISE THE DRAFT
RULES OF PROCEDURE IN LIGHT OF THE SUGGESTIONS MADE AT
THE MEETING, THE NEWLY REVISED ECOSOC RULES OF PRO-
CEDURE, AND IN CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, PRESENT
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A REVISED DRAFT TO THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE".

6. REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS: THE COMMITTEE
DECIDED THAT THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT, IN COOPERATION
WITH THE OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND IN CONSULTATION
WITH OTHER AGENCIES, SHOULD FURNISH A GENERAL FRAMEWORK
FOR THE FORMULATION OF ACTION PROPOSALS TO BE DEVELOPED
BY THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED
THAT ECOSOC URGE THE SYG TO ACCEPT THE OFFER MADE BY
UNEP TO ASSIST IN COVERING THE COST OF THE TRAVEL OF
DEVELOPING COUNTRY DELEGATIONS TO ATTEND REGIONAL
MEETINGS. THE US, ALONG WITH OTHER WEO COUNTRIES RE-
SERVED ON THE ADDITIONAL PARAGRAPH DRAFT DOCUMENT E/C.
7/L.45/REV.1, PARA 9, WHCIH URGES UNEP TO GIVE URGENT

CONSIDERATION TO INVESTING ITS FINANCING OF THE PREPARA-
5946 WORK FOR THE CONFERENCE. ON THIS POINT THE US
DELEGATION EXPRESSED "SERIOUS DOUBTS" ON THE NECESSITY
AND PROPRIETY OF ASKING FOR FURTHER FINANCIAL CONTRI-
BUTIONS FROM UNEP. THE COMMITTEE WAS INFORMED THAT THE
UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL HAD ALREADY ALLOCATED
164,000 DOLLARS TO SUPPORT THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR
THE WATER CONFERENCE.

7. THEMATIC PAPERS: WITH REGARD TO THE PAPERS TO BE
SUBMITTED TO THE CONFERENCE ON MAJOR THEMES PERTAINING
TO WATER RESOURCES, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED THAT
GOVERNMENTS BE ASKED TO ENSURE THAT THE PAPERS
EMPHASIZE AND HIGHLIGHT POLICY ASPECTS OF THE SUBJECT
MATTER RATHER THAN THE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS.
THE US AND CANADIAN DELS HAVE INFORMALLY DISCUSSED THE
POSSIBILITY OF PRODUCING A JOINT THEMATIC PAPER ON THE MANAGE-
MENT OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY WATERS.

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ACTION IO-11

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8. CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION. WITH REGARD TO ORGANIZING THE CONFERENCE'S WORK, THE COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND MEETINGS, SHOULD BE FINALIZED AT A SECOND PREPCOM TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ACTUAL THEMATIC PAPER TOPICS PREPARED AS WELL AS THE RESULTS OF THE FORTHCOMING REGIONAL MEETINGS.

9. PROVISIONAL AGENDA. THE FOUR MAJOR HEADINGS LISTED IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA APPROVED BY ECOSOC DURING ITS JULY 1976 MEETINGS (DOCUMENT E/C.7/L.37) WERE REINFORCED BY THE PREPCOM, WITH TWO AMPLIFICATIONS PROPOSED BY THE NORDICS. AN ADDITIONAL SENTENCE WAS APPROVED TO TOPIC III OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA STATING THAT "ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONFERENCE IS TO PROMOTE THE LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS THE NECESSITY TO AVOID A SERIOUS LACK OF WATER OF SATISFACTORY QUALITY FOR ALL USES, TO CORRECT IT, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHERE SUCH A LACK ALREADY OCCURRED, AND GENERALLY TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROMOTE A BETTER MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING RESOURCES. (SEE /DOCUMENT E/C.7/L.42/REV.1) THE SECOND ADDITION WAS ALSO A NORDIC PROPOSAL WHICH ADDED UNDER THE TOPIC OF POLICY OPTIONS (TOPIC III) THE QUESTION OF "HOW TO DEAL WITH WATER POLLUTION ARISING IN ONE COUNTRY OWING TO THE DISCHARGING OF POLLUTANTS IN ANOTHER COUNTRY". OTHER THAN THE ABOVE, THERE WAS NO SHARPENING OF THE AGENDA IN TERMS OF SUBJECT MATTER: HOWEVER THE US WAS SUCCESSFUL IN GAINING GENERAL CONSENSUS FOR THE IDEA OF RESTRICTING PAPERS TO PRIMARILY POLICY TOPICS.

10. DOCUMENTATION: DURING THE GENERAL DISCUSSION ON WHICH DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE TRANSLATED BY THE SECRETARIAT, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT UNLESS THERE WAS A RESTRICTION ON THE NUMBER OF THEMATIC PAPERS INTRODUCED BY GOVERNMENTS, THE COST FOR TRANSLATING THESE AND OTHER SUPPORTING PAPERS WOULD BE ENORMOUS. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT COUNTRIES THEMSELVES BE URGED TO PROVIDE TRANSLATIONS OF THEIR PAPERS IN AS MANY LANGUAGES AS POSSIBLE AND THAT SOME ADDITIONAL EFFORT BE MADE TO SEEK VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE. AS IT NOW STANDS, THE SECRETARIAT WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSLATING THEMATIC PAPERS.

11. COMMENT: GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE WENT ABOUT ITS BUSINESS IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER STICKING TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS, WITHOUT A SERIOUS DEBATE, AND IN A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ARGENTINA/BRAZIL DISPUTE ON THE QUESTION OF

SHARED WATER (PARANA RIVER) DID NOT DEVELOP INTO ANY
SIGNIFICANT WAY, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A MINOR INTERPLAY
DURING THE LAST SESSION WHEN THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT
WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR APPROVAL. AT THAT JUNCTURE
THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATE NOTED THAT PARAS 9-15 OF DOCUMENT
E/C.7L44A 3 EXPRESSED THE VIEWS OF ONLY ONE DELEGATION
(ARGENTINA), WHICH SHOULD BE BALANCED BY A
PARAGRAPH REFLECTING HIS COUNTRY'S VIEWS: THIS WAS
AGREED TO. THERE WAS SOME ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF
THE EGYPTIANS TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF "OTHER PARTICIPANTS"
BY SEEKING AN AMENDMENT TO RULE 21 OF THE
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PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE TO ALLOW ANY REPRESENTATIVE
THE RIGHT TO REPLY (SEE DOCUMENT E/C.7 L.44/A 4),
AND THEY ALSO SOUGHT TO CHANGE RULE 21 (MAJORITY RE-
QUIRED) FROM A TWO-THIRDS' MAJORITY TO A SIMPLE
MAJORITY TO REMOVE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MATTERS OF
SUBSTANCE AND PROCEDURE. SINCE ALL OF THE PROPOSED
SPECIFIC CHANGES WERE SUBSUMED IN THE OMNIBUS PARA-
GRAPH INDICATED IN PARA 5 ABOVE, AND SINCE NEITHER
OF THESE CHANGES WERE EXTENSIVELY DISCUSSED DURING
THE PREPCOM, THESE PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DEALT WITH
DURING CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SECRETARIAT. DURING
THIS PREPARATORY MEETING THERE WAS LITTLE MENTION OF
NIEO OR CERDS AND LITTLE RANCOR OF THE DEVELOPING
-DEVELOPED COUNTRY NATURE. IF THE TENOR OF THIS PREPCOM
CAN CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE PREPARATORY PERIOD AND
FOLLOW THROUGH TO THE CONFERENCE ITSELF, THE WATER
CONFERENCE COULD VERY WELL PRODUCE SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS
IN FOCUSING WORLD ATTENTION ON THE NEED TO BETTER
MANAGE AND UTILIZE WORLD WATER RESOURCES.
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